



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
1725 23rd Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, California 95816
Telephone: (916) 324-5801 • Fax: (916) 324-0271

Lisa Ann L. Mangat, Director

**OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING
Holtville, CA 92250**

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STAFF REPORT: Education, Interpretation, and Outreach Program

STAFF: Donna McGuire, Interpretation and Outreach Program Manager

SUBJECT: 2017 Education, Interpretation, and Outreach Program Report

Summary

The Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division provides an active, progressive statewide education, interpretation, and outreach program to inform the public about safe, lawful, and responsible off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation. The 2017 Education, Interpretation and Outreach Report will focus on new programs or projects, modifications of existing programs to become more relevant to specific audiences, and programs that have grown significantly during the last year.

Discussion

The OHMVR Division's interpretation program is less than ten years in the making and has come a long way reaching more than 150,000 people annually. Dedicated interpreters, rangers, seasonal park aides, and volunteers engage the public during in-park education and interpretation programs and conduct outreach at a variety of venues that include OHV events, sports events, county fairs, community events, safety fairs, youth events, school programs, and career fairs.

Carnegie SVRA staff kicked off the writing of an Interpretation Master Plan. Commission approval of Carnegie's General Plan in October of 2016 paved the way for preparing a plan, which will direct the park's interpretation for the next 20 years. Interpretive topics, themes, and goals will provide guidance for interpreters to create programming relevant to park visitors. The Interpretation Master Plan will be a tool to connect visitors with the park and create a relationship in which visitors will support park programs and help protect resources. Work on the plan will continue in 2018.



An OHMVR Division partnership with NYPUM (National Youth Project Using Minibikes) debuted at Hungry Valley SVRA in July. The program brought twelve inner-city youth from the Los Angeles area to Hungry Valley to participate in a weekend of responsible riding and career presentations. Some of the youth took the mentoring to heart; one young man is now interested in pursuing a ranger career and returned to Hungry Valley for a ranger ride-along. Hungry Valley staff look forward to hosting more NYPUM events in 2018 and future collaboration with the Division headquarters staff.



At Prairie City SVRA, guided walking tours of vernal pools are held in the spring to provide an opportunity for visitors to see an area closed to OHV recreation for resource protection. The tour theme “A vernal community that protects off-highway enthusiasts, while nurturing the cycle of life” appealed to visitors and created curiosity about how these little pools protected their right to ride.

After learning that the vernal pool area provides a buffer to help with noise reduction, visitors felt a deeper appreciation and connection with this resource. The vernal pool tour guides presented information in a fun and relatable way, and visitors no longer viewed the pools as a reason to lose riding areas but as a reason to save both a resource and recreation opportunities.

Hollister Hills received an increase of requests for school programs from local elementary teachers and conducted 19 programs for classrooms ranging from kindergarten to 5th grade. By far, the most requested program was Birds of Prey that focuses on their adaptations and what makes them excellent hunters. Students learn about local birds of prey through various tactile props such as photos, skull replicas, wings, feathers, talons, birdcalls, eggs, and pellets.




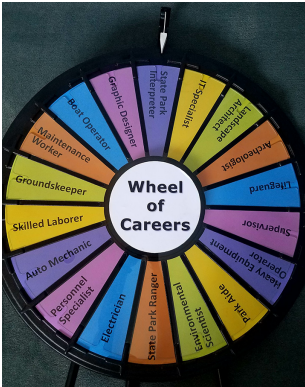
One of the adaptations that catches the interest of students is the serrated edges of feathers on owl wings that help them to fly virtually soundless. The program also addresses the delicate web of life and how human activities affect food chains. The Birds of Prey Program allows students to gain a deeper understanding of how living things are connected and that nature has its checks and balances.

Ocotillo Wells SVRA interprets the desert in many ways. Staff provide weekly school visits to 3rd grade classrooms throughout the region. The focus of the program is animal adaptations in the desert environment. Aligned with 3rd grade common core curriculum for science and art, teachers prize the program. During 2017, Ocotillo Wells interpreters visited 43 schools, with an average of three classes, and reached almost 3,000 students. Not only have the students learned about the unique adaptations of desert animals, they have learned about Ocotillo Wells SVRA.

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The Sacramento team had several new outreach events during 2017. Many hunters use OHVs to access areas on federal and state lands. For the first time, staff had an opportunity to educate the hunting community about the importance of OHV safety and environmental protection at the Hooked on Hunting event, held in Paradise. Another first event was participation at the Marine's Semper Ride events at Camp Pendleton and Camp Miramar where the team had an opportunity to educate the marines and their families about OHV safety and environmental protection.

At Heber Dunes SVRA, the sand constantly blows, swirls, shifts, and rearranges itself. Occasionally, though, it settles over the landscape and just sits. Sitting was not, however, what the interpretive staff at Heber Dunes were doing throughout 2017. Rediscovery of park resources was the primary interpretive focus. Everything from

designing and funding a “Discovery” Barn to hosting a series of “Beach” hikes moved from dreams to reality. The Off-Highway Junior Ranger program took on new momentum as enthusiastic parents volunteered their time to brainstorm new activities and program ideas. The rediscovery of Heber Dunes by NYPUM El Centro closed 2017 and ushered in the new year on an especially high note. The sand is once again on the move. The Heber Dune’s interpretive team has never stopped!



Just as the moving sand at Heber Dunes SVRA, the wheels are always turning with the Division’s statewide interpretive teams to continue developing and delivering dynamic programs. Staff are geared up for 2018 to create new programs and improve on existing ones to appeal to various learning styles, incorporate active engagement, and are relevant to the audience. This year already started off in a robust fashion for the Sacramento team serving more than 11,900 attendees at the International Sportsmen's Expo and Youth Fair in January. The OHMVR Division's statewide interpretation team is ready to educate the people of California about recognizing the importance of recreating safely and responsibly and to value environmental protection for sustainable OHV recreation.

The OHMVR Division’s statewide education, interpretation, and outreach program was very successful during 2017 serving approximately 158,862 people.

Unit	Venue/Event Resulting in Most Contacts	2017 Total Interpretive Contacts
Heber Dunes SVRA	Imperial County Mid-Winter Fair & Festival	8,084
Ocotillo Wells SVRA	In-Park Interpretive Exhibits & Programs	67,469
Hungry Valley SVRA	Fiesta Days	2,821
Oceano Dunes SVRA	Mid-State Fair	20,290
Hollister Hills SVRA	San Benito County Fair	9,040
Carnegie SVRA	Visitor Appreciation Day	1,808
Prairie City SVRA	Hangtown Motocross Classic	7,723
Clay Pit SVRA	In-Park Contacts	1,475
OHMVR Division HQ	Sacramento County Fair	40,152
Total Statewide 2017 Interpretive Contacts:		158,862

Commission Action

For information only.

Attachments

None